REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully reconsidering this application.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-11 are pending in the present application. Claim 1 is independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 1.

Claim Amendments

Claim 1 has been amended by way of this reply to clarify the present invention. Specifically, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the entirety of all back surfaces of the hard base are in contact with the front surface of the keypad, thereby preventing the entirety of all back surfaces of the hard base from being in contact with any member other than the keypad. Support for these amendments can be found, for example, in Figure 1 and the accompanying text. As such, no new matter has been added by the amendments.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claims 1-2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,021,630 ("Taylor"). Independent claim 1 has been amended in this reply. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to these claims as amended, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Embodiments disclosed in this application relate to a cover member for a push-button switch. As shown in Figure 1, the keypad **2** is formed on the hard base **1** of the push-button switch and thinly covers the entire back surface of the hard base **1**. Because the keypad **2**

may be made of elastic material, for example, a silicone rubber film, it may protect the hard base **1** and other adjacent solid members. Further, the keypad **2** made of a silicone rubber film is formed between the hard base **1** and a circuit board and, thus, hard members including the hard base **1** and the circuit board are prevented from being in direct contact. Advantageously, such circuit board can be protected from mechanical shock or damage (*see e.g.*, paragraphs [0058], [0067] of the published specification).. Accordingly, amended independent claim 1 requires, in part, that the keypad is made of a silicone rubber film, and a front surface of the keypad is in contact with an entirety of all back surfaces of the hard base, thereby preventing the entirety of all back surfaces of the hard base from being in contact with any member other than the keypad.

Taylor discloses, particularly in Figure 1, a sealed resilient contact switch for surgical applications. The switch includes a cap **10** formed from a flexible material, such as silicone rubber, and is positioned over a deflectable metal dome or plate **11**. The cap **10** is then disposed within a retaining sleeve **25** to prevent the side walls of the cap **10** from collapsing during use. Particularly, as shown in Figure 1, during use, the cap **10** establishes "a pressure seal at circumferential interfaces **22**, **23**, and **24** formed along the *inner wall surface* of the sleeve **25**." *Lines 4-6, Column 4 of Taylor*. As such, the Examiner asserts that, because the cap **10** contacts the *inner wall surfaces* of the retaining sleeve **25**, Taylor anticipates claim 1 of the present application.

However, in response, Applicant respectfully asserts that Taylor fails to teach all of the elements of amended independent claim 1. Specifically, as claim 1 requires, the front surface of the keypad is in contact with *an entirety of all back surfaces* of the hard base, thereby preventing *the entirety of all back surfaces* of the hard base from being in contact with any member other than the keypad. For example, as shown in Figure 1 of the present application, the

back side of the hard base **1** is completely and entirely covered by the silicone rubber film keypad **2** such that the keypad **2** will provide protection and prevent any other object or member from directly contacting the back side of the hard base **1**.

Taylor, though, does not disclose having the keypad in contact with an entirety of all back surfaces of the hard base. Rather, as shown in Figure 1 in Taylor, the flexible cap **10** only contacts the retaining sleeve **25** at the circumferential interfaces **22**, **23**, and **24** formed along the *inner wall surface* of the sleeve **25**. In fact, the back surface of the retaining sleeve **25** in Taylor, or at least a large majority of the back surface of the retaining sleeve **25** in Taylor, is actually in contact with the circuit board **12**, rather than in contact with the flexible cap **10**. Therefore, Taylor fails to show or suggest that a front surface of the keypad is in contact with an entirety of all back surfaces of the hard base, thereby preventing the entirety of all back surfaces of the hard base from being in contact with any member other than the keypad, as required by amended independent claim 1.

In view of the above, Taylor fails to disclose all limitations of independent claim 1. Claim 1 is therefore patentable over Taylor. Dependent claims are also patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection(s) Under 35 U.S.C § 103

Claims 3 and 6

Claims 3 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taylor in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,367,133 ("Schmidt"). Claim 1, from which claims 3 and 6 depend, has been amended in this reply. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to these claims as amended, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, Taylor fails to show or suggest all limitations of independent claim 1. Further, Schmidt does not teach that which Taylor lacks. This is evidenced by the fact that Schmidt is only relied upon for teaching a keytop made of a hard resin. In view of the above, Taylor and Schmidt, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest all limitations of claims 3 and 6. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 5

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taylor in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,995,126 ("Larson"). Claim 1, from which claim 5 depends, has been amended in this reply. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to this claim as amended, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, Taylor fails to show or suggest all limitations of independent claim 1. Further, Larson does not teach that which Taylor lacks. This is evidenced by the fact that Larson is only relied upon for teaching the use of a plurality of switches. In view of the above, Taylor and Larson, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest all limitations of claim 5. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 4, 7, and 9-11

Claims 4, 7, and 9-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taylor in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,366,805 ("Fujiki"). Claim 1, from which claims 4, 7, and 9-11 depend, has been amended in this reply. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to these claims as amended, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, Taylor fails to show or suggest all limitations of independent claim 1. Further, Fujiki does not teach that which Taylor lacks. This is evidenced by the fact that Fujiki is only relied upon for teaching the manufacture of an electrical component formed of a polycarbonate resin and a selectively adhesive silicone rubber. In view of the above, Taylor and Fujiki, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest all limitations of claims 4, 7, and 9-11. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 8

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taylor and Schmidt in view of Fujiki. Claim 1, from which claim 8 depends, has been amended in this reply. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to this claim as amended, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, Taylor and Schmidt fail to show or suggest all limitations of independent claim 1. Further, Fujiki does not teach that which Taylor and Schmidt lack. This is evidenced by the fact that Fujiki is only relied upon for teaching the manufacture of an electrical component formed of a polycarbonate resin and a selectively adhesive silicone rubber. In view of the above, Taylor, Schmidt, and Fujiki, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest all limitations of claim 8. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 07200/083001).

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Respectfully submitted,

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